

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 RSC-01

CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 L-02 H-01

PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 COME-00 PM-03 DODE-00 SAJ-01

NIC-01 /078 W

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R 041452Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2637

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUDAPEST 0349

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, HU

SUBJ: HUNGARIANS - DETENTE AND BREZHNEV

REF: BUDAPEST 34

1. OVER PAST SEVERAL WEEKS HUNGARIAN MEDIA HAVE METICULOUSLY AVOIDED ANY COMMENT OR NEWS MEDIA SPECULATION ONE WAY OR OTHER RE WHEREABOUTS OF BREZHNEV. TREATMENT OF DETENTE, ALTHOUGH CHARACTERISTICALLY CAUTIOUS, HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO HUNGARIAN COMMENT AS SUCH ONE WAY OR THE OTHER ON DETENTE, HUNGARIAN PRESS, RADIO, AND TV HAVE CONSPICUOUSLY PLAYED UP TASS AND PRAVDA COMMENTARIES EMPHASIZING SOVIET COMMITMENT TO PURSUIT OF DETENTE.

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2. WITH EXCEPTION OF ONE ARTICLE BY VAJDA (REFTEL)

THERE HAS BEEN PRECIOUS LITTLE SAID IN HUNGARIAN PRESS ABOUT SOVIET REJECTION OF TRADE BILL. PRESS, HOWEVER, HAS RESORTED TO SAME TECHNIQUES USED IN ITS APPROACH TO DETENTE, I.E. USE OF TASS AND PRAVDA DESPATCHES OUTLINING SOVIET POSITION. ALL IN ALL, HUNGARIANS HAVE TREATED THIS ISSUE MOST GINGERLY AS FAR AS PUBLIC STATEMENTS ARE CONCERNED.

3. IN OUR CONTACTS WITH HUNGARIANS, OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL ALIKE, WE HAVE OBSERVED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN, EVEN FEAR, RE IMPLICATIONS FOR DETENTE OF BREZHNEV'S ABSENCE FROM PUBLIC EYE. THESE HUNGARIANS FEAR THAT IF FOR ANY REASON (HEALTH, SETBACK SUSTAINED IN FAILURE OF U.S. TO COME FORWARD WITH ACCEPTABLE TRADE BILL, KREMLIN IN-FIGHTING, ETC.) BREZHNEV SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM HIS POWER POSITION RESULT COULD BE SETBACK TO DETENTE POLICY AND POSSIBLY RETURN TO KREMLIN DRIVE TOWARDS TIGHTENING UP THROUGHOUT EASTERN EUROPE. FAILURE OF HUNGARIAN MEDIA TO PROVIDE MORE POSITIVE ASSURANCE THAN SIMPLE REPLAYS OF TASS AND PRAVDA COMMENTARIES HAS DONE NOTHING TO IMPROVE OUTLOOK OF AVERAGE HUNGARIAN. IT APPEARS THAT FEW HUNGARIANS WILL BE RELIEVED OF THEIR ANXIETIES RE IMMEDIATE FUTURE UNTIL BREZHNEV APPEARS ON SCENE AND AS CLEARLY IN POWER AS BEFORE.
MUDD

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